

Kenneth Pollack

Resident Scholar

Middle East political-military affairs (with an emphasis on Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia)

US-Middle East security and foreign policies

Kenneth M. Pollack is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where he works on Middle Eastern political-military affairs, focusing in particular on Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf countries.

Before joining AEI, Dr. Pollack was affiliated with the Brookings Institution, where he was a senior fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy. Before that, he was the center's director and director of research. Dr. Pollack served twice at the National Security Council, first as director for Near East and South Asian affairs and then as director for Persian Gulf affairs. He began his career as a Persian Gulf military analyst at the CIA, where he was the principal author of the CIA's classified postmortem on Iraqi strategy and military operations during the Persian Gulf War. Among other recognitions, Dr. Pollack was awarded the CIA's Exceptional Performance Award twice and the Certificate of Distinction for Outstanding Performance of Duty, both for work on the Persian Gulf War.

Dr. Pollack has also worked on long-term issues related to Middle Eastern political and military affairs for the Joint Chiefs of Staff when he was a senior research professor at the Institute for National Security Studies at National Defense University.

Dr. Pollack is the author of nine books, including "[Unthinkable: Iran, the Bomb, and American Strategy](#)" (Simon & Schuster, 2013), named one of the "Best Books of 2013" by The Economist and one of the "100 Notable Books of 2013" by The New York Times; "[A Path out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East](#)" (Random House, 2008), a Washington Post and Foreign Affairs bestseller, which was chosen as one of The Washington Post's "Best Books of the Year" for 2008 and as an editor's choice of The New York Times Book Review; "[The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America](#)" (Random House, 2004);

and “[The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq](#)” (Random House, 2002), a New York Times and Washington Post bestseller.

Dr. Pollack is the author of numerous articles and has been published in The Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, and The Atlantic, among others.

He received his bachelor’s from Yale University and a doctorate in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Experience

- Editorial Board Member, The Washington Quarterly, 2016–present
- Contributing Editor, The National Interest, 2010–present
- Consultant, Gerson Lehrman Group, 2010–present
- Adviser, Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, 2009–present
- Senior Adviser, Albright Stonebridge Group, 2006–present
- Senior Fellow, 2002–15; Director, The Saban Center for Middle East Policy, 2009–12; Director of Research, The Saban Center for Middle East Policy, 2002–09, The Brookings Institution
- Adjunct Professor, Georgetown University, 2004–present
- Senior Fellow and Director of National Security Studies, The Council on Foreign Relations, 2001–02
- Senior Research Professor, Institute for National Security Studies, National Defense University, US Department of Defense, 2001; 1998–99
- Director for Persian Gulf Affairs, National Security Council, 1999–2001
- Research Fellow, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996–98
- Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs, National Security Council, 1995–96
- Persian Gulf Military Analyst, Central Intelligence Agency, 1988–95

Education

Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology
B.A., Yale University